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ABSTRACT

THE GENERAL GOAL OF THIS PROJECT IS TO DEVELOP COURSES OF STUDY WHICH WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN INCREASING THE SELF ESTEEM, GOALS, AND RELATED BEHAVIOR OF BLACK CHILDREN WHO ATTEND BLACK SCHOOLS. THIS PROJECT ADDRESSES ITSELF TO THREE INTERRELATED PROGRAMS WHICH WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY BLACK PEOPLE FROM THE BLACK COMMUNITY. THE PROGRAMS ARE: (1) INSTRUCTION IN BLACK HISTORY THROUGH ART, DRAMA AND MUSIC; (2) FIELD TRIPS WHICH PROVIDE INTERACTION WITH BLACK "WORK MODELS" ON THE JOB; AND (3) ACTIVITY GROUPS: A PROGRAM OF CONTINUING INTERACTION WITH A VARIETY OF "LIFE MODELS" WHO ARE PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. THE PROGRESS REPORT DISCUSSES A SUMMER PILOT PROGRAM IN BLACK HISTORY AND CULTURE OFFERED TO ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS AND FULL YEAR PROGRAMS IN AFRICAN AND AFRO-AMERICAN MUSIC, DANCE, ART, AND SOCIAL STUDIES INSTITUTED IN THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN PITTSBURGH. (KG)

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THE SELF-ESTEEM AND GOALS OF INDIGENT CHILDREN

PROGRESS REPORT

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Department of Psychology

University of Pittsburgh

November, 1969

UD 009 534

Self-esteem and Goals of Indigent Children[1]

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1. Summary of Project: The general goal of this program is to develop courses of study which will be effective in increasing the self esteem, goals, and related behavior of Black Children who live in the Black Communities and attend Black Schools. This Project addresses itself to three interelated programs which will be carried out by Black people who are from the Black community or a similar background. The programs are: 1) Instruction in Black History through Art, Drama, and Music 2) Field trips which provide interaction with Black "work models" on the job and 3) Activity groups: A program of continuing interaction with a variety of "Life Models" who are productive members of the community.

Two general research questions are to be investigated: 1) To what extent can viable programs using members of the community, as indicated above, be developed, and 2) what will be the effects of such programs on the self-esteem, goals, and related behavior of Black fifth grade school children in the Beltzhoover, Miller and Vann schools.

2. Progress Report I (October 31, 1968)

a. Changes in Program:

Since funds were not available for the project until early April, 1968, it was decided to defer the actual start of the School related programs to the Fall of 1968. Further, it was decided that the intervening period from April to October 1968 would be employed for: 1. Gathering of materials for Black History and Development of Teaching Techniques. 2. Testing out these materials and techniques in a pilot program on Black History run during the summer of 1968, and 3. To train staff in Black History and Culture for the Fall Classes.

During the development of the program during the summer of 1968, the staff of the self-esteem project worked closely with the principals of the three experimental schools to be involved. Further, during this time, with the increasing importance on the national scene placed on Black identity and its relation to Black History, the staff of the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education became increasingly interested in the self-esteem and goals project. The summer project, noted above and discussed below, since it was community based, received enthusiastic support from the Black community. As a result of the cooperation of the school principals, the interest of the school board staff, and the acceptance of the program by the Black community, it was decided that the Black History and culture classes would be carried out in the experimental schools during regular school time, instead of after-school classes as originally planned. Further, the time to be devoted to Black History and Culture was extended to three class periods per week in two of the three experimental schools and to four class periods per week in the third school.

b. Development and conduct of the summer pilot program in Black History and Culture:

Mr. Eugene Davis was hired by the project in April 1968 as Director of Community Programs. In order to give the project an identity in the Community it was named the "Hill Youth Program": the administrative offices of the program were set up in Langley Hall of the University of Pittsburgh, where the project secretarial and research staff who were hired were housed.

Supported by grant MH 14366 from NIMH

The YMCA located in Pittsburgh's Hill District had been given funds by the OEO through the Pittsburgh Mayor's Committee on Human Resources for the conduct of a summer recreation program for children in the Hill District. Through conferences with the YMCA staff it was agreed that classes in Black History and Culture would be provided by the self-esteem and goals project as part of the "Y" summer program. The "Y" program and the self-esteem project were closely coordinated, a daily schedule of activities was worked out, and the responsibilities of the staff of the two programs were delinated. "Black" organizations and leaders within the community were contacted and the efforts of Black students at the university of Pittsburgh and public school teachers were utilized. Nine summer staff were hired by the self-esteem project, including seven teachers, one group worker, and one supervisor. Thirty people, including group workers and supervisors were hired by the YMCA project. Mr. Russell Shelton, Director of the Hill House Association in Pittsburgh's Hill District made available space in seven buildings in the community for conduct of the summer programs; the Pittsburgh Public Schools made space in three schools available; the Parks and Recreation Division of the city of Pittsburgh loaned the use of the Ammons recreation center; the University of Pittsburgh made its olympic size swimming pool available for use by the project. Three-hundred and fifty children from ages 6 to 14 were enrolled in the summer program. It was decided to made the Black History Classes available to all the children and, further, to make a comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching techniques for the younger (6 to 9) and older (10 to 14) children.

Having decided to conduct the summer pilot program, the self-esteem project next moved to develop a curriculum and teaching techniques. Numerous meetings were held with community leaders in an effort to get the views of the community on Black History. The meetings were often hectic with many critical comments expressed about traditional approaches to the history of the role of black peoples in the U. S. History. The degree of emphasis that should be given to African History was a source of disagreement among members of the community. The aims of the project were strongly endorsed, however, and the involvement of members of the community in decision-making made for strong support of the program.

It was decided that the self-esteem project would develop its own curriculum for use in the project. Two black students at the University of Pittsburgh, Mr. Curtis Porter and Miss Judy Richardson were hired as research assistants to gather resource materials and assist in developing a curriculum. A committee consisting of Mr. Porter, Miss Richardson, Mr. Davis, Professor Arthur Tuden of the Pitt Anthropology Department, Professor Samuel Hayes of the Pitt History Department, and Mrs. Delphine Sisay, a West African History scholar, met and devised a curriculum outline in Black History and Culture. In addition an outline of the History of "Black Music" and "Black Drama" was drawn up. These materials are included in the enclosed appendix.

The development of appropriate curriculum materials was a difficult task. Dr. Edward Sweat, and Dr. Vincent Harding, Historians in Atlanta, University of Clark College were contacted for their views on Black History; they provided the project with valuable resource materials; Mr. Davis attended conferences on techniques of teaching Black History in Chicago and Philadelphia, in New York City on Negro History and Life. Dr. Preston Wilcox of Brooklyn College, gave valuable suggestions on methods of structuring the Program within the community.

The materials, once gathered and outlined, were presented, along with reference materials, to the teachers in the summer program. The teachers then met to devise techniques for presentation of materials. An illustrative list of techniques developed is presented in the appendix.

One question which arose prior to the conduct of the program was in what manner the staff of the summer program could be made more aware of the needs of the children in the program in order to both facilitate their effectiveness in the program and their observational abilities for the evaluation of the summer program. Toward these ends, a sensitivity training program was devised for all staff in the summer program, that is, both the recreational and teaching staff. Two all-day sensitivity training sessions were run for this staff by the principal investigator, and Drs. Anthony Broskowski and Glenn Miller of the University of Pittsburgh, Psychology Department. The training sessions were oriented around role-playing techniques in which the staff played those roles relevant to the lives of the children and their parents.

Following the summer program, the teachers and other staff filled out a questionnaire on the impact and effectiveness of the teaching program. From the questionnaire results and post summer program conferences the following results were obtained:

1) The interest of the younger children (6-9) was rated, (5 point scale, very low (1) to very high (5)) as low with no differences between males ($\bar{x}$ = 2.00) and females ($\bar{x}$ - 2.08).

2) The interest of the older children (10-14) was rated as medium, with females ($\bar{x}$ = 3.3) showing slightly more interest than males ($\bar{x}$ = 3.0).

3) The younger children showed relatively little awareness of the relation of the History program to their being black; the older children related the content to themsleves.

4) For both younger and older children there was little interest in formal presentations of Black History. When, however, the approach was changed to History oriented around Black Music, Drama, and Art, with students directly involved in projects in these areas, there was a marked increase in interest in the concepts presented. This finding led to a major restructuring of the teaching approach to be employed in the project.

5) Forty-four percent of the workers in the summer program reported receiving no comment from parents regarding the teaching of Black History to their children. Twelve percent reported reservations on the part of the parents in having their children taught Black History and Culture.

As a result of the summer programs, then, it was concluded that in order for History to be most meaningful for children, historical concepts would have to be organized around participatory programs in Art, Music, and Drama. Hence, a new outline, organized around these three areas was developed (See Appendix). This outline was presented to the Pittsburgh Public Schools as the program to be conducted in the schools.

c. Research tools:

A preliminary test was made of the research tools to be employed. The Group Personality Projective Test, it was found, could be most effectively administered through a concomitant playing of a tape which read off the multiple choice items in addition to having the children read the items from the test booklet.

The Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory and the Self-Concept tests to be employed were administered to two fifth grade classes in a school not employed in the research to determine their suitability for fifth grade children in Ghetto Schools. The trial run showed the tests were suitable.

A procedure was devised for developing a scale of "Negroidness". As a masters thesis, a graduate student in the Psychology Department, devised a procedure for constructing a scale, using pictures, for use with children. This scale, which will have alternate forms, is being constructed by presenting 100 pictures of Black and White children to 160 judges, 80 Black and 80 White. The pictures are to be rated, using both category and magnitude estimation procedures, according to both degree of whiteness and degree of Negroidness. Sex differences both among raters and the photographs are taken into account. Dr. Donald McBurney of the Pitt Psychology Department provided invaluable guidance on the scaling procedures to be employed.

d. Training Teachers to Teach Black History:

In order to train teachers who would teach the children in the schools, a training program was devised. The University of Pittsburgh, through its School of General Studies, aided in the development of this program which consisted of formal lectures and workshop programs in teaching techniques. A six-week course, Education 890, was developed, and participants in this course received University credit for taking the course.

e. Current Status:

Out of the experiences of the summer pilot program an approach to teaching Black History and Culture was developed. The Pittsburgh Public Schools have approved the conduct of the program in the schools during regular school time. The psychological tests employed in the research, are to be administered during the first week in November; the History and Culture program will be begun in the classroom, the second week in November. The field trips will be begun at the end of November. After school interest-activity programs will be initiated sometime early in December.

3. Progress Report II (October 31, 1969)

a. Conduct of Programs:

In the fall of 1968, programs of African and Afro-American music, dance, art, and social studies were begun in three elementary schools in the Pittsburgh School System. The programs were conducted with the entire fifth grade class of the three schools; the Miller, Vann and Beltzhoover schools. The programs were designed so as to teach historical concepts through the subject matter noted above. Three classes per week in two of the schools (Miller and Vann) and four classes per week in the third school (Beltzhoover) were devoted to the conduct of the project programs. Approximately two hundred and fifty children were involved in the programs. The programs in the schools were conducted by project staff in the areas of music and dance; the art and social studies programs were conducted by regular school teachers who participated in project workshops and received special instruction in the aims and curriculum of the project. Mr. Ural Wilson, a former lead dancer with the Kathryn Dunham group, and a well-known figure in the Pittsburgh Black Community, assumed responsibility for the dance program and the music programs were carried out by Miss Cathy Simpson, a former Vista Volunteer, Mr. Tommy Sewell, a professional jazz musician, and Mr. Mondul Bannessia, a music graduate student at Carnegie-Mellon University. A workshop was carried out by project staff for other music and dance (physical education) teachers in the schools so as to enable them to relate the content of their classes to the project classes. The social studies classes were conducted by Mr. Louis Vincent, the principal of the Beltzhoover School. All the project teaching staff were members of the Black Community. Prior to the initiation of the program, members of the staff met with local citizen groups; parental permission was obtained for participation of the children in the programs.

An after school program for children in the project was carried out in the three experimental schools. The after school program involved a continuation of the dance, music, art and social studies programs of the regular school day carried out by project staff and other community representatives. In addition, an after school photography club was organized. This program was conducted by Mr. Ralph Proctor, an amateur photographer and Director of a local TV show, "Black Horizons". The photography club was oriented at the development of self-esteem in two ways, viz., by providing the children with a sense of competence through learning to take and to develop

their own pictures and, further, by providing the children with an opportunity to develop an appreciation of beauty in their own neighborhoods as they photograph people, trees, buildings, etc. that they encounter in their everyday lives. In addition to the after-school program, the field trip program, oriented around experiences in art, drama, and music, were begun. Children in the program took a trip to an exhibition of art by black artists at Allegheny Community College where they had an opportunity to meet with the artists. In addition, the children took six trips in conjuction with a presentation of African and Afro-American dance by project children at the annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival (see Community Relations, below).

The programs outlined above, then, continued through the school year ending in June, 1969 with the onset of summer vacation. In the Fall of 1969, the programs were begun again with the same children who are now in the sixth grade. A project newspaper has been initiated which will enable the children to have their photographs and writings published and circulated among people who are important to them in their neighborhoods. The Field Trip phase of the program has been expanded to include trips to WTAE TV-channel 4, Duquesne light Co., a Museum Art Show, Diebold Machine Co., IBM, Koppers Research Center, Urban League, Mellon Bank, and St. Regis Paper Co. to enable children to interact with a number of Life Models.

B. Community Relations

The "Self-esteem" project made several contributions to the community in relation to self-esteem and racial justice. Briefly, these were:

1) Pittsburgh Folk Festival - Through the efforts of project staff and the Pittsburgh African Heritage Society, an agreement was made with the annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival Committee. Under the direction of Mr. Ural Wilson, the children of the project put on, before several thousand people in the Pittsburgh Civic Arena, a program of African and Afro-American dance and music as part of the Children's Matinee of the Folk Festival. This was the first time such a program had been presented in the history of the Folk Festival. The development of the Folk Festival Program was a community-wide project involving not only the staff and children of "Project Self-esteem", but also their parents and others in the community in the making of costumes, stage props, and in support of rehearsals for the performance.

2) "I Am Someone" - WIIC, channel 11, Pittsburgh, made a 30 minute TV documentary entitled, "I am Someone" on the Self-esteem project. In addition to its telecast on March 17, 1969 (See Appendix A) the documentary has been telecast several times on WQED-TV, Pittsburgh as part of its Black Horizons program.

3) Vann School Operetta - The Self-esteem program in the Vann elementary school was the stimulus for the presentation by the entire school of an original operetta, written by a member of the local community, concerning the leaders of various kingdoms in African History.

C. Research: Data Collection

In the Fall of 1968, prior to the introduction of the programs into the experimental schools, the pretest data was collected. Students from the Black Action Society of the University of Pittsburgh were trained as testers and administered the following tests to all of the children in the experimental program (N = 207) and in the three control schools (N = 170).

1) Group Personality Projective Test

2) Child Picture Ratings - Six child pictures, three male and three female, one of the three being white, another black, and the third intermediate along a dimension of Negroidness were presented individually to the class. Each child made a choice on twenty-four paired comparisons of adjectives for each of the six pictures. The adjectives involved comparisons between Negro-stereotype-favorable, Negro-stereotype-unfavorable, nonstereotype-favorable, and nonstereotype-unfavorable adjectives.

3) Child Job Rating - from a list of jobs, each of which had a prestige rating associated with it, each child selected one job for each of the six pictures referred to in (2) above. The child was instructed to indicate "What do you think this child will be when he is grown up".

4) Adult Picture Ratings - Six adult pictures, as in (2) above, were rated with the same twenty-four paired comparisons employed in the child picture ratings.

5) Adult Job Ratings - From the list of prestige rated jobs, the child indicated what kind of work he thought each of the individuals in the adult pictures was engaged in.

6) Self-rating - Each child rated himself with regard to the twenty-four paired comparisons described below.

7) Self-Job Rating - Each child indicated from the prestige rated job list what kind of work he might expect to do when he grew up. The child could add any job not included in the list.

8) Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory - The childs section of this inventory was filled out by each child.

In the original design of the project it had been planned to collect the psychometric data prior to the beginning of the school and after-school programs and following their termination at the end of the sixth grade. As the project progressed it was decided to gather some data half way through the program (at the end of the fifth grade) in order to determine if any effects could be demonstrated after one school year in the program. Hence, in June, 1969, tests (2) through (8), described above, were again administered to the children in the experimental and control schools.

Section IV SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT (continued)

Duringthe course of the program there had been much informal feedback with regard to the impact of the programs on adults within the community. In order to get some systematic data on the reaction of the parents of the children in the experimental groups, a questionnaire was devised. Women from the Parent Teachers Associations of the Schools involved were trained as interviewers and, on a fee for interview basis payable to the PTA treasury, conducted interviews using the questionnaires with a sample (N = 127) of the parents.

D. Staff Changes

At the conclusion of the fifth grade phase of the program, Mr. Eugene Davis, who had had responsibility for the organization of the programs of the project took another position within the University of Pittsburgh. Mrs. Jacqueline Jones (BA, University of Pittsburgh, 1969) who had been employed by the project as a research assistant, was appointed Director of the Programs.

It had been the experience of the project during its first year that the use of part time individuals for the conduct of the school and after-school programs was economically and administratively undesirable. Hence, it was decided to employ a full-time dance and music instructor.

E. Tentative Results

The Self-esteem project was designed to investigate two questions. The first concerned the degree of success that would be achieved in developing such a program using community resources. It is clear that the program has had wide community support and has been successful in that regard.

The second question concerned the impact of such a program on the self-esteem, goals and related behavior of the children in the program. Though the data relevant to investigating this question are not yet all in, anecdotal information and random interviews with children in the project indicate some behavioral changes. The principal of the Beltzhoover school, for example, reports that the children are less antagonistic to each other, and their has been a reduction in hostile behavior among children within the school. The children indicate their positive response to the classes, the project teachers, and an absence of discomfort in their being called "black".

An interesting sidelight concerns the impact of the program on the behavior of teachers in the experimental schools. It has been reported that some teachers employ the project as a punitive device, that is, have warned children who do not behave that they will not be allowed to attend the special classes. The project staff has tried to discourage such use of the program.

F. Foundation Support

1) Howard Heinz Endowment - Through the interest of Henry J. Heinz, III, a grant of 8500. made from the Howard Heinz Endowment to support the art phase of the self-esteem project.

2) Pittsburgh Foundation - This foundation granted 4985. for the support of the after-school photography program and the project newspaper.

3) A. W. Mellon & Sons made a grant of 2187. to support the dance program of the project.

e Television Programs for Mc

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TV KEY PREVIEWS

Today's top shows as previewed by reporters in Hollywood, New York and Pittsburgh.

7:30 p. m. (11)—TV-11 Reports. "I Am Someone." A film report on Project Self-Esteem, a unique educational program involving 210 fifth graders in three elementary schools in Pittsburgh's black communities. The program reveals how Project Self-Esteem classes in art, music, dance, social studies, drama and photography are included as part of each school's fifth grade curriculum and as after-school activities. Newman John Christian is narrator for the show.

8:00 p. m. (11) (6) (7)—Laugh-In. Sammy Davis Jr., taxes, and St. Patrick's Day—in that order—keep the show rolling along. Davis and Arte Johnson kid the Irish as a vaudeville team called the O'Shaughnessy Brothers. Sammy steps into a "Here Comes the Judge" routine, and pops up as various characters, like the President, in Mod Mod World's look into the future.

9:00 p. m. (4)—ABC News Special. "Three Young Americans in Search of Survival." An often intriguing two-hour study of three young ecologists, individually fighting some of the life and death problems facing our nation. Ecology is the science devoted to man and his environment, and in this case, it runs the gamut from air and water pollution and conservation, to working with youth gangs in Philadelphia. Although the three young Americans are the central characters in this documentary, narrated by Paul Newman, the true star of the show is Dr. Paul R. Ehrlich of Stanford University, whose pertinent and frightening comments are heard throughout the program.

10:00 p. m. (2) (9) (10)—Carol Burnett. In a takeoff on dance marathons of the '30s, Carol and guest Martha Raye appear as contestants while crooner Mike Douglas sings "Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries." Miss Burnett and Douglas try an Irish medley in honor of St. Patrick; Carol becomes a lady jockey in the news; Martha Raye and Carol play housewives visiting a topless waiter place; and Harvery Korman, Vicki Lawrence and la Burnett try to get out of their snowbound cabin in the final sketch.

11:30 p. m. (11) (6) (7)—Tonight Show. Bill Cosby takes over as host-of-the-week, substituting for vacationing Johnny Carson. Bill's opening night lineup is scheduled to include the Checkmates, Satchel Paige, Vikki Carr, actor James Brown, and Allan Sherman.

(13) Book Beat
Anne Moody discusses her book "Coming of Age In Mississippi."
(53) Marine Boy

4:00 P. M.
(2) (9) (10) Art Linkletter
(4) Adventure Time (Cont.)
(6) (7) Match Game
Friendly Giant
lectronics
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Kindergarten
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(7) Mike Douglas
(9) Batman

5:00 P. M.
(2) (10) Merv Griffin (Cont.)
(4) Movie (Cont.)
*(11) I Love Lucy
*(13) What's New
(53) Dark Shadows
(6) Flintstones
(7) Mike Douglas
*(9) Perry Mas

5:3
(2) (10)

6:00 P. M.
(2) Eyewitness News
(4) News
(11) Donald O'Connor
James Brown, Pat O'Brien, Del Walley are guests tonight.
*(16) Investigators
(53) Flintstones
(6) (7) News
(9) (10) News
6:28 (4) Weather—Schano

6:30 P. M.
(2) (9) (10) News—Cronkite
*(4) Perry Mason
(11) Donald O'Connor (Con
(13) Misterogers
(53) Gilligan's Island
(6) (7) Huntley-Brinkley

7:00 P. M.
(2) Eyewitness News
*(4) Perry Mason (Cont.)
(11) Huntley-Brinkley
*(13) En France
*(16) Making Things Grow
(53) What's My Line
(6) Truth or Consequen
(7) Mod Squad
*(9) Beverly Hillbillies
*(10) McHale's Navy

7:30 P. M.
(2) (9) (10) Gunsmoke
A convicted man saves Ki and she sets out to return the
(4) Avengers
"Homicide and Old Lace." Tara infiltrate the ranks of to prevent the crime of fi
(11) TV-11 Reports
(See TV Key)
*(13) Playing the Guit
*(16) Auto Mechanics
(53) Password
(6) Bewitched
(7) Mod Squad (Cont

8:00 P. M
(2) (9) (10) Gunsmok
(4) Avengers (Co
(11) (6) (7) Row
(See TV Key)
(13) Speaking
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*(16) More
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THE CITY 3

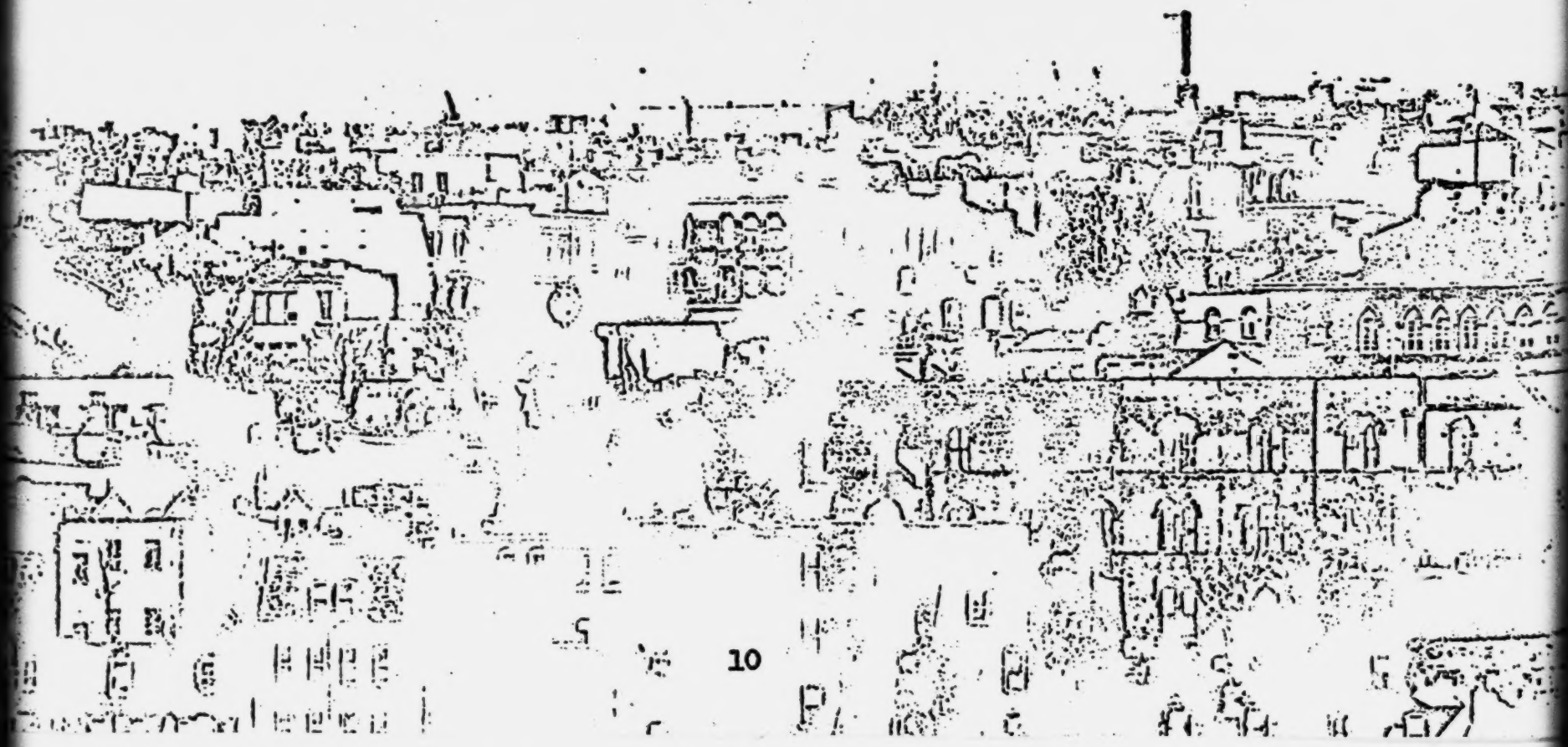
THE HILL AND BLACK CHILDREN

The Avenue. The main drag. Centre Avenue. Too real to the unemployed black male, the hustler, the prostitute, the proponent of black consciousness, the kids with no place to play in summer except the hot sidewalks and "tot lots" since the rebellions. The Hill district . . . a myriad of broken dreams. The Hill where when a fire bomb explodes, white newspaper headlines report, "VIOLENCE HITS THE HILL." Yet for those who live there the headlines are incomprehensible. For them, violence is an every day seldom reported thing. It's narcotics, it's gambling, it's payoffs, it's a high interest rate, it's the never-ending hustle for survival.

To whites who see it by day, the Hill with its dilapidated tenements, boarded storefronts, paper-littered streets and rat-infested alleys, is either the harsh reality of poverty in America or a view of despicable people living in an equally despicable neighborhood. Those bold enough to frequent its joy spots at night know it only as an exotic playground. A fantasy land. A never-never land. A place where one can get it—whatever it is—wholesale, half-sale, almost no-sale. But it's home for approximately 50,000 people. Among them are church-goers, some shaken in their faith, others buoyed in their convictions that tumultuous times such as these are indicative of the last days. The exemplary solid citizens are there too. They work hard, pay their taxes, and like their counterparts everywhere, wrestle with trying to make ends meet. It's all there and more, and unless you live there or in a community like it, you'll have no problem referring to it as the "ghetto," and describing its children as "underprivileged," "disadvantaged," or "handicapped," while ignoring their ability to cope with a hostile environment, nurtured by an unresponsive system.

Call it bureaucratic red tape or the imposition of the ills of society on the school system, the fact remains that dealing with the urban schools has taught black people the schools are not only part of that unresponsive system, but also are reinforcers of the values which originally created communities like the Hill. In echoing this sentiment, Gene Davis, director of the University of Pittsburgh's experimental program on Self-Esteem and Goals of Children, says, "Black parents feel they have no say as to how their children are being educated. Naturally, they're hostile. To them, the school is an unconcerned authoritarian representative of the white power structure."

Mr. Davis' program is out to change all that. But before one can understand how,



one must ask the question, "Why?" Recently, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders investigated the matter. The Commission's findings, based on the "Equality of Educational Opportunity Report" prepared pursuant to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (generally called the "Coleman Report"), revealed, "In the critical skills—verbal and reading ability—Negro students fall further behind whites with each year of school completed. For example, in the metropolitan Northeast, Negro students on the average begin the first grade with somewhat lower scores on standard achievement tests than whites, are about 1.6 grades behind by the sixth grade and have fallen 3.3 grades behind white students by the twelfth grade."

The situation is growing worse. The black child derives little benefit from urban public school education as it exists and operates today. The schools are simply not attuned to his needs. Most schools are white middle class oriented. The curriculum, staff and students complement each other. As a result, the white middle class child has little difficulty in finding reinforcement for the ideas he brings into the classroom, and is faced with few incongruities in his school, faculty and home relationships. But, according to Martin Deutsch, director, Institute for Developmental Studies, Department of Psychiatry, New York Medical College, "When the lower class child gets into first grade, too frequently his cognitive, sensory and language skills are insufficiently developed to cope with what for him are the complex and confusing stimuli offered by the school." The stimuli are complex because they are based on different life-style than that of the poor. Above and beyond the effects of poverty and class, the black child must deal with values, imparted either consciously or unconsciously, that contradict his reason for being.

Faced with the inequities within the system as exemplified by conditions within his home and surroundings, with dehumanizing black sterotypes which also have affected his parents' concept of themselves, a constant barrage of directives aimed at "denigerization" via the mass media, and often his own teachers and textbooks, the black child learns that "black is bad," either intrinsically or instrumentally, and "white is good." His ego-development and self-concept are influenced by these factors to the degree that the youngster learns to evaluate himself in terms of the "Other." Thus, in order to succeed, he realizes he must become an imitation white man. Some succumb and seek the promise of individual freedom in the face of their own group's suppression. Others, frustrated by the contradiction of their existence, write off education as irrelevant and drop out, or remain long enough to get a diploma, but are ill-equipped to compete

with their white counterparts for jobs.

Such is the nature of black discontent with the schools. Although not new, it was not until angry black parents and pupils had directed various forms of overt hostility at the schools that officials were willing to listen. Still entrenched in a legacy dating back to the post-Revolutionary War period when it was ". . . realized that separate, private and religious schools could not provide the equality, unity and freedom necessary for the new democratic nation,"[1] most educators were primarily interested in the education of the masses. They saw it as their duty to mold dissident elements into one nation by minimizing

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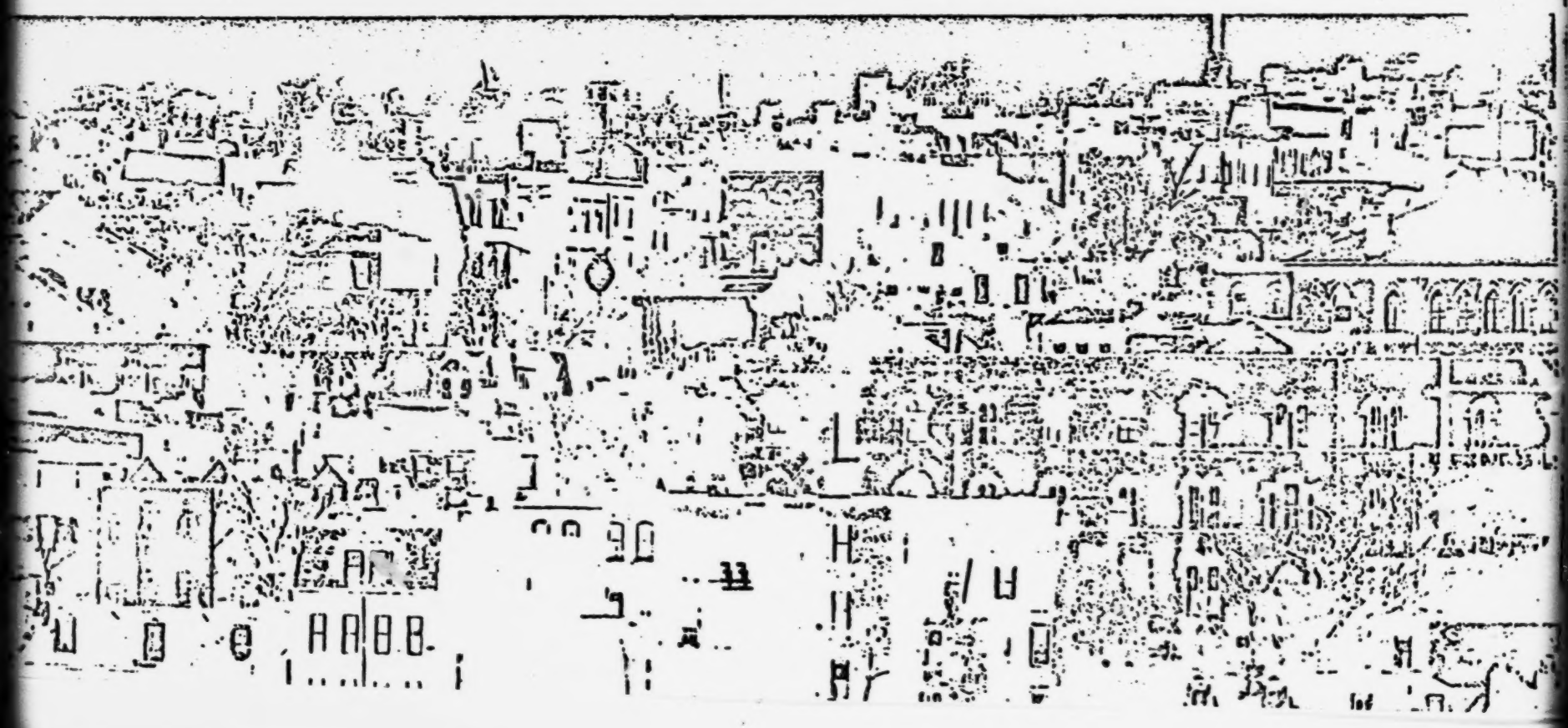
[1]Butts, R. F. "History of Education," *World Book* V (1960), 69.



the inherent contradictions found in such a diverse and heterogenous society. And public education, imbued with this role, has worked remarkably well considering the countless number of immigrant families that have lost their accents, forgotten historical rivalries and have become a part of the great American melting pot. But it would be euphemistic to say that the black American has gotten into the soup.

"Lately, administrators have become increasingly aware of the potential the schools have for meeting the special needs of black children, but their concern is negated by their past history, and their programs by and large are piecemeal attempts at teaching 'Negro History,' " Gene Davis charges.

Mr. Davis, a black man working on his Ph.D. in Education, sees the need for not only making the schools within black communities relevant to black children, but also an integral part of the community. To these ends he submitted a research proposal. Now under way, his Self-Esteem and Goals of Children program addresses itself specifically to the related problems of low self-esteem and low levels of aspiration among fifth grade children.

Of the seven elementary schools in the Hill, all of which range from 95 to 99 percent black, two were randomly selected as program schools in addition to a third from another black community. Three others were designated control schools.

Being carried out in cooperation with Pitt's Psychology department, the Pittsburgh Public Schools and volunteers from the black community, the program will last 18 months. At the outset, fifth grade children in all six schools were given a series of self-esteem tests. One test determines the effect stereotypes have on the child by measuring his ability to associate a person's face with his occupation. Photographs of two dark-skinned blacks, two light-skinned blacks and two whites are in the test along with a list of 24 jobs ranging from high to low prestige, i.e. street sweeper to scientist, waitress to school teacher. The first part of the test asks the student to pick the kind of job each person is "Likely To Have," "Not Likely To Have." The last part asks the student to choose which of two statements best describes the person pictured. Descriptions range from loyal to "sometimey," happy-go-lucky to sarcastic. For evaluation purposes, the same series of tests will be given at the end of the program.

With Dr. Sanford Golin, director of Clinical Training in Pitt's Psychology department, acting as principal advisor, two general research questions are being investigated. They are: 1) can viable programs be developed to mobilize community resources and ally them with the schools, and 2) will such programs be effective in increasing the self-esteem, goals and related behavior of black students.

Self-Esteem and Goals of Children courses are offered during the regular school day. The subject matter is divided into three parts: 1) instruction in black culture, 2) modified compensatory education, and 3) interest activity groups.

The aim of the course in Black Culture is to help the child develop pride in being black. Emphasis is placed on art, music, dance, drama and the history of blacks in America, West Africa and contemporary Africa. The teachers include West Africans studying at Pitt, black public school teachers and those provided by the Western Pennsylvania Negro Historical Society.

The design of the latter two areas of the subject matter—modified compensatory education and interest activity groups—is to introduce the student to a greater number of options in his pursuit of a career by showing him what other blacks have accomplished under similiar handicaps.

"In the absence of a father figure or other suitable male model, many black teenagers are impressed by, and identify with the numbers man or the pimp with his wad of money, women and flashy car. To a young kid, these guys have made it," Mr. Davis says, "There's not enough interaction between suitable life models and children in the community due to the lack of viable organizations to interest those living there."

Filling part of this need, Mr. Davis has enlarged upon the idea of compensatory education. Students enrolled in the regular Compensatory Education Program offered by the Pittsburgh Public School system take an average of two field trips per year. Under the experimental program, participants will take nine trips over an 18 month period, and have the opportunity to interact with the black volunteer "Work Models," employed in a variety of industrial and commercial establishments, and small businesses in the Hill.

In addition, a number of individuals closely associated with the community and easily accessible to students have volunteered to serve as "Life Models." They supervise the interest activity programs for their respective club groups. Each club is composed of 15 students, grouped according to their expressed interests and information gathered from their school folders. As a group, they meet biweekly and engage in various recreational, technical and group discussion activities.

"The response has been tremendous," says Mr. Davis. "Teachers, professional athletes, factory workers, fraternity and sorority members, small businessmen, community women and established professionals have been deeply involved in helping to meet the black child's identity needs since the program's inception."

At least two field trips to the "Life Model's" place of employment are scheduled, and when possible, additional visits are made. For example, if the "Life Model" is an auto mechanic, he may choose to teach his group about the component parts and operation of an engine by having students visit his shop until they have assembled a motor.

In Pittsburgh, as in most major cities, black school enrollment is increasing. Today, over 39 percent of the city's elementary school population is black and the figure is growing. In light of the failure to end *de facto* segregation, black parents are becoming increasingly vocal in their demands for quality education. While no panacea, Self-Esteem and Goals of Children is one of the many necessary experiments and innovations being tried to make education meaningful to black youth.

"Admittedly, we're only scratching the surface, but the information obtained from this research should be invaluable in formulating an educational policy for tomorrow," sums up Mr. Davis.

—David Coleman